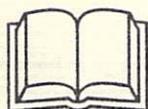


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



# *The Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

March, 2003

*To Your Name, Lord,  
be the Glory  
for 95 Years*

# Press On, W&W!

Leroy Garrett

I recently told a longtime friend that I had not seen for awhile, "I am now 84," and he said, "Well, that's better than being old!" Perhaps that is the response I should make to *Word and Work's* 95th milestone. Journals among our people don't get old, they just eventually fade away. We have had hundreds, if not thousands, of papers in our two centuries. Most of them last but a few years. Only a few have gone a half century, and no more than two or three have lasted for one hundred years. This puts *Word and Work*, at 95, in a distinct class.

While perseverance is a virtue for any publication, isn't age that has makes *Word and Work* unique. Since it began, the journal has been one of the freest in the history of Churches of Christ. It has always been a paper resolved to teach "the whole counsel of God." It has had no "Keep off the grass" signs for either its editor or its writers. It has created a tradition of openness and fairness, and it has been eminently Biblical in its offerings.

I have admired *Word and Work* and its editors for "staying with its knitting." It is the only journal among us that has given prophecy its proper place in the teaching of the Bible. It has unashamedly remained faithful to its tradition as pre-millennial in its interpretation of prophecy. It is important for Churches of Christ that this point of view remain on the table for study and discussion. *Word and Work* can claim some of the credit that Churches of Christ today are more open to prophetic teaching.

At the same time the journal has had a positive influence in moving our people out of the backwater of legalism and sectarianism. We are coming to see ourselves as the people we were born to be -- "a movement to unite the Christians in all the sects." We are once more appreciating that grand motto: "In essentials, unity; in opinions (and methods), liberty; in all things, love." And we are once more seeing ourselves as "Christians only, but not the only Christians."

*Word and Work* for almost a century has stood in the gap, living precipitously, and it has been willing to get its nose bloodied. That is why it has endured. It has had something to say, and it has said it well.

As all papers do, *Word and Work* will one day fade away into history. That is how it should be, for nothing in this world is immortal. It is not how long either a person or a paper lives, but whether he or it has kept the faith and fought the good fight. As *Word and Work* finishes its 95th lap those of us watching from the stands cry out, "Press on, W&W!"

(Leroy Garrett preached, taught in college, wrote, and edited Restoration Review for decades. His history textbook, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, is outstanding. He still labors to magnify God's grace and to unify His people.)

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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# 95 Years Old: To God be Glory

Alex V. Wilson

Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. --Psalm 115:1, NIV

It was 1908. Teddy Roosevelt was president. Model T Fords began rolling off the assembly line, and Thomas Edison won a legal dispute over the rights to the moving picture projector. The Detroit Tigers won the American League pennant, sparked by a young outfielder named Ty Cobb. AND, down in New Orleans, a few disciples of the Lord Jesus began publishing a Christian magazine named *The Christian Word and Work*. Its motto was "Work and Worship." An editorial stated, "One of the leading ideas in establishing Word and Work was to locate isolated congregations and put them to work, by telling them how well others are doing who are similarly situated." The subscription price was \$1.00 a year, and for some months a special offer was made--3 months for only 10 cents. (By 1914 the price dropped to 50 cents per year, 5 cents per copy!)

## "As it was in the Beginning"

Some interesting items are found in the few issues I have seen from the 1908-1915 era. Regular columns at that time included a "department of first principles," "department of work and worship," "department of prophecy," one entitled "for winners and watchers of souls," a current events section, reports from the mission field, and comments on Sunday school lessons. There was also a monthly column, "Our Boys and Girls," which was "edited by Cousin Ellen."

An article from 1913 caught my attention. It is entitled, "Immorality Laid to Women's Garb." It describes how a state legislator from Cincinnati, alarmed by "a great wave of immorality now sweeping over the country," introduced a bill asking the governor to appoint a commission to "prescribe the fashions to be worn by women in the state of Ohio." One wonders what resulted.

But it is the advertisements which perhaps strike you the most. You could buy a teachers' reference Bible with concordance, Bible dictionary and other helps for \$1.75. And those early issues contained ads not only for religious supplies and books but also for a coal dealer, a pharmacy, an insurance agency, a clothing store, typewriters, and "self-sharpening secret-spring shears--always sharp." At the bottom of the table of contents page is another ad: HOSIERY--Darn-proof, Guaranteed; 12 pairs, \$1.00. Intense Black, Tan or assorted. Gents or Ladies..." from a hosiery mill in North Carolina. An editorial says

some readers dislike having ads in the magazine, to which the reply is given that they might not be needed if readers would pay for their subscriptions on time and would help increase the journal's circulation. (In some ways, conditions haven't changed much.)

### Moving North

It was 1916. President Wilson and the whole country were fearful about the war in Europe. Wilson also advocated women's suffrage, but even that year--before women got to vote--Jeanette Rankin was elected as the first woman to the U .S. Congress. That was also the year that Einstein developed the theory of relativity, Rockefeller's personal wealth passed one billion dollars, and a young painter named Norman Rockwell for the first time had a drawing appear on a magazine cover. AND, in New Orleans, editor Stanford Chambers proposed that *Word and Work* magazine be edited by R.H. Boll and published in Louisville. The offer was accepted, and a new era began.

This month we are looking back to our magazine's roots and beginnings. We are pausing to thank our Lord. Truly, "Tis grace has brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home." Brother Boll used to say of *Word and Work* that it was always "dying yet behold--it lives!" (2 Cor. 6:9)

Some of you may find this issue boring, filled with names and events that are meaningless to you. Hey, that's o-k. You may skip the historical stuff if you want. But be sure not to miss the spiritual vitamins in Gordon Linscott's articles (starting with "Rethinking Repentance", and the article on the book of Revelation, also the short selection from F. G. Allen's sermon.

In one of our former special-anniversary issues we ran an article by each of our former editors (except the founder!). In another we devoted the whole magazine to re-runs of some of R. H. Boll's meaty articles. In a third one we began a 2-part biography of Stanford Chambers. This time we highlight some writings of Gordon Linscott. He's not so widely known as most of the others. He was quiet and humble, but the waters ran deep. After he fell asleep in Christ, someone commented, "Gordon influenced many people for the Lord, quietly." You will be blessed by revisiting him this month.

Through most of its history W&W has had close ties with the Portland Avenue Church in Louisville. Five W&W editors ministered in various ways at that congregation and/or its school, P.C.S. So it seems fitting to celebrate the church's 125th birthday last year along with W&W's 95th this month. Our Father has blessed each through the other.

# Aims and Purposes of WORD AND WORK, 1916 [and 2003]

R. H. Boll

The first thing we want to say about *Word and Work* is that it goes out on a mission of peace and good will, for God's interests and not man's. It is not designed to compete with any other publication; to build up or to defend any personal interests whatsoever, or to magnify man in any wise; but to the glory of God and for the true blessing of its circle of readers. We trust that the merits of this magazine will be such as to make a place for it in Christian homes and everywhere.

\* \* \* \*

It is our chief aim to produce a clean magazine: free from objectionable controversy, from personalities, and bitter sayings; clean in principle, and clean in doctrine--in short such a journal as can be passed out to friends with the assurance that it will in none of its features reflect discredit on that lofty Name by which we are called.

\* \* \* \*

Another point of no less importance is that the magazine shall be non-sectarian, to the extent that God may grant us wisdom and grace to enable us to make it so. We intend that it shall hold up the standard of simple and non-sectarian Christianity. There is a sectarianism without; and a sectarian tendency inheres in the flesh of us all. We hope to hold a good ground against the outspoken sectarianism; and to fight a good fight against the other sort which rises up unaware, subtly and insidiously from within.

\* \* \* \*

It behooves us well to be watchful. Those who have subscribed themselves as simple Christians to stand by the word of God alone, and to repudiate all human authority in doctrine; who have set themselves to be simply members of God's church, and subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, have taken high ground. And high ground has to be maintained. Light burns at constant expenditure of fuel or power; but darkness comes of itself. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance;" for the bondage of creed creeps in upon us on noiseless feet.

\* \* \* \*

There is a constant adverse current, and if once we rest on our oars, thinking we have at last found the right channel we shall presently wake up far adrift from our course. A great man said, "Every generation needs a reformation." If that is correct it is because every

generation is apt to drift, or else to stagnate, to depart wilfully, or to stop at some mark reached by their fathers, or to try to conserve their light by shutting the lid down upon it. And then it is a fight to regain the right principle and to go on again. We can have God's light only in constant communion with him and his word. For neither can sunlight be carried about in a box, but be had only in connection with the sun itself; nor can the living water be had except always fresh from the living Fountain. When we try to preserve it in cans and cisterns it becomes scummy. And the people who use it stagnate also. Having no heart to see for themselves what God says, they become chiefly anxious to know what good brethren teach, and fearful only lest they might come to be considered unorthodox. And so, unwittingly they slip their necks under the yoke of human tyranny and fall under the bondage of a human creed, whether that be formal or informal, whether written or unwritten.

\* \* \* \*

Without at all wishing to accuse anyone of such failure as that, we desire simply to make it known that it is one of the chief aims of this magazine to work for the pure New Testament Christianity and the truth of the word of God. We shall be little concerned about "the representative views of the brotherhood"--of any brotherhood; but very greatly concerned as to God's word in all its utterances, and shall strive to draw always from the living Fount; and to guard against the encroachment of sectarianism.

\* \* \* \*

The editors of this paper have convictions of their own, strong and deep on many matters of faith. But these convictions whatever they be are not the standard of doctrine of this paper. The word of God is the standard and to it the convictions of the editors are themselves subject. And it may be well to say here that, while it would not be expedient to open the paper to every disputant and to every scribe who may differ with anything that may have appeared in it, and to make a public forum of its columns (which would be very unprofitable for its readers)--yet on any considerable matter of difference, we expect to call upon some of the best and ablest brethren who may hold an opposing view to set forth that view. Thus we hope to provide that the views and convictions of the editors shall not dominate the teachings of this magazine, but that the way shall always be open for friendly comparison of differences, and mutual helpfulness in searching out the truth. We shall have discussions, but never strife.

\* \* \* \*

As for the rest, the magazine must speak for itself. May God bless it, and help us to make it such that His blessing can justly rest upon it.

# A Rich Legacy and Lofty Goals

Alex V. Wilson  
Adapted from July 1986

It is with fear and trembling that I assume this co-editorship of *Word and Work*. And surprise too, for I had not expected to write any front-page editorials till a few months from now. It is one thing to write articles (my first one appeared in 1958, when I was in college), but another thing to assume co-responsibility for an entire magazine.

*Word and Work* has a rich heritage. Think of Stanford Chambers. A stalwart defender of the faith and proclaimer of the Gospel. Then R. H. Boll, outstanding editor for forty years (1916-56), a master-teacher of all the word of God, and especially of God's grace. Then co-editors E. L. Jorgenson and J. R. Clark (1956-62). Faithful, loving, humble men, concerned to build bridges and remove barriers among the people of God. Then Gordon Linscott (1962-75), with his deep passion for our Lord and Savior Himself, and our need to know Him (see following reprint). Then W. Robert Heid (1976 till 1986), with his much-needed emphasis by life and teaching on Christian homes and solid family relationships. I praise our Father for each of these men and what they have meant to me and many others.

There's another way of gaining insight into the philosophy and goals of this magazine. Think of its name, with its twin emphases of truth and action, belief and behavior, knowledge and service. How important to maintain that balance and avoid lopsidedness. This aim is also stressed by our motto, "A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God." We don't want to ride hobbies but provide a balanced diet ( though of course at certain times some truths are needed more than others). And note the two Scriptures on our cover: "Holding fast the faithful Word" and "Holding forth the Word of life." Many folks claim to hold fast to the Bible, but they never hold it forth to others. What a crime! Meanwhile others have lost their grip on God's truth and have nothing worthwhile to hold forth to anyone else. How sad.

Last, I remind you of our missionary-letters section. The motto of this section, coined by Don Carlos Janes, is "Greater things for God." This challenge is urgent, for a world now holding six billion inhabitants desperately needs to hear God's word and see His work. Please pray with us that this magazine will not soothe but arouse its readers to greater things for our great God.

# What Shall We Emphasize?

Alex V. Wilson

Adapted from Aug, 1986

If we intend to be a profitable magazine, our goals should be clear.

Last month we surveyed the history of *Word and Work*. We reminisced about its editors through the decades, and also saw that its title and various mottoes are significant. The WORD of God in the Bible, and the WORK of God in the world--these are weighty matters for every disciple.

We aim to keep those two general emphases: to remain "founded on the Word and focused on the world," as someone else expressed it. We dare not wander from God's revealed truth, but we also must make that truth relevant to the world we live in now--the complicated, exciting, bewildering 21<sup>st</sup> century. We ought to scratch folks where they itch.

I've asked myself (and the Lord) what specific facets of truth need to be given top priority in this magazine. What should we stress? So many answers have come to that question that it's laughable, for you can't emphasize everything. But, for what they are worth, here they are:

1. The Lord God Most High...Himself. Unless we know Him, intimately and progressively, His holiness and grace, nothing else matters. So we shall emphasize Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and our worship of Him in spirit and truth.

2. The Cross lies at the heart of God. To know Him we bow at Christ's cross and receive His love daily. To know Him more, we take up our own cross, daily. Lord, make Calvary more meaningful to us.

3. Christian character, for without holiness no one shall see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14) It's still true that what we are is more important than what we do. We activist Americans need to be reminded of that fact.

4. Evangelism and missions: God loves the world; Christ died for the whole world; the field is the world. We should lift up our eyes, and pray and give and go ...across the street and across the oceans.

5. Christian education: Too often our Bible-teaching is ill-prepared, irrelevant, impractical and dull. (I hope yours is an exception to

that statement). We need more prayer, more study of the scripture and of the pupils and of effective teaching. Articles are planned in this area.

6. Lessons from the Past: Church history and biographies can help us escape spiritual near-sightedness and narrowness, so we won't be swept away by every fad that comes along.

7. Hope for the Future: Prophecy is something we've always stressed, often helpfully but sometimes dryly and academically. New Testament prophetic passages always are used as motivation to godly living and zealous service. So let's never omit the "since these things will occur, *therefore let us. . .*"

8. Strength for the Present: Thank God for our longtime belief in the indwelling Holy Spirit. May we experience more and more His teaching ministry, guidance, fruit and gifts in our churches. Knowing about Him isn't enough.

9. Family living: nothing is more urgent than building strong Christian homes in this decadent age. This is so obvious it needs no further comment now.

10. Unity among God's people: Demolishing walls and building bridges between true believers should have a high priority among us. We shouldn't consider it just a lobby for certain people who happen to like that sort of thing, like Leroy Garrett (and Stone and the Campbells). Our Lord Christ showed it is important to Him (John 17), so it should be important to us, too.

11. Social issues. That's a thorny area. Christians disagree on how we should involve ourselves in matters like voting, fighting porn and abortion, etc. Yet it's clear we should be salt and light in this rotten world, and that requires at least knowledge of scriptural principles and also current events and trends. We'll keep having articles on such issues. Feel free to disagree, as always; but think!

12. Practical Training: Elders, preachers, teachers, deacons, deaconesses, evangelists--all of us need practical help in many areas. How can I be a more effective leader? How can we improve our church budget? Can my sermon outlines be clearer? How can we train missionaries better? Visitation; pastoral counseling; comforting the bereaved; delivering the demonized; starting a busing program; women's ministries; home Bible classes; "sharing meetings" for mutual edification; etc. etc. Those with experience and insights in such matters should help the rest of us. We want Word and Work to be practical, not just theoretical.

13. Last but most important (except for #1 and #2): Revival. That is, GOD moving among us in ungrieved, unquenched power. "Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19), such as occurred in apostolic times and also some other periods of church history. Oh how we need revival, for only the fullness of power from on high can make these other urgent matters we've mentioned come alive among us: holiness, evangelism, missions, strong families, unity among believers, impact on society, etc. Yes, mercy-drops around us are falling, thank God; but for the showers we plead!

Whew! That's my list of priorities. What about yours?

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## **REPRINT: Editorial Freedom-in Christ**

**(This was brother Linscott's first editorial, October, 1962.)**

The Word and Work is not chained to a man or a creed or a tradition. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "For freedom did Christ set us free." Occasionally we hear of Christians who seem to prefer not to be free. They would prefer that we all speak or write from a single point of view, with no differences of opinion. They would like for us to "speak for the Church", authoritatively defining just exactly what "the Church of Christ teaches". Brethren--those of you who may feel the same way--I can heartily sympathize with you. It is very reassuring to know exactly what you believe and rather disconcerting to be in doubt.

This past August C. V. Wilson took me to the YMCA with him and gave me a few elementary lessons in swimming. First I had to learn to float. That wasn't easy: I'm used to feeling something solid beneath me. To fall into the water and just lie there was little less than a terrifying experience--at first. Gradually, I found that the water would hold me. I could relax and still not sink, though I could feel nothing holding me up. What an experience!

Now the parallel: Human nature naturally seeks a spiritual hand-rail--an authoritative "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not". The pharisees, zealous for the law of God, had turned that law--though spiritual in itself--into such a handrail; they could grasp it and say, "Here I stand, firm for God." The development of church dogmas and the Roman priesthood was a similar outworking of this human tendency--the church makes all the decisions. In similar fashion the 19<sup>th</sup> century "Restoration Movement" in some quarters degenerated into the familiar rule-of-thumb: Five steps to conversion, five items of worship, and two essentials for Christian living; hold to these basic truths and you're all right. It is very solid and reassuring beneath the feet. But it is just as restricting as it is limited in scope. These are but bits of the truth, and unable to minister to the whole of our needs.

In contrast, consider the life which is sustained by the Person of Jesus Christ, who is The Truth. In experience, it's something like floating: the edge of the pool is still there, and so is the floor, but neither is any longer a vital source of support. It is disconcerting at first-- I speak from experience--to say, "Henceforth, I trust Jesus Christ alone for my salvation, and place no reliance in what I may know--or may have done." (But the result is a glorious freedom from the spirit of bondage to fear. Now Christ is our life: we are totally borne along by Him, and free to follow the promptings of His Spirit. Since we are no longer holding for dear life to the handrail of doctrine, we are free to examine that doctrine more carefully and objectively than before. We are free to discover new truths, or to revise beliefs which do not stand careful scrutiny. It is true there may come times when we will be uncertain about this doctrine or that, but this brings no fear to the heart of the Christian who can say with Paul, "I know HIM in whom I have believed."

To avoid being deceived, correct alone is not fool-proof. The absolute essential is a personal, living knowledge of Him who is the author of doctrine.

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## **Re-Thinking Repentance**

Gordon R. Linscott, 1967

A writer in a certain church publication uttered a blanket anathema upon all suggestions that we "re-study our doctrinal position." He asked, in effect, "How could anyone dare to question the doctrines we hold?" This is a far cry from the time (about a century ago) when Barton W. Stone and the Christians associated with him were derisively called New Lights, because they were accustomed to inquiring, "Have you had any new light from the Word of God lately?"

We would like to encourage the continuation of such a spirit...not with a view to making major changes in doctrine (which the writer mentioned above seemed to fear), but rather to the end of catching new glimpses of the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is so easy to hold doctrines abstractly--as related to nothing in real life--or to relate them only to men when they should speak pre-eminently of our Lord. So, I would like to focus our attention on a familiar doctrine.

### **REPENTANCE --A PRIVILEGE**

Most people take repentance for granted, as though it were in our power to exercise at our pleasure. Yet we read (Acts 11:18) "To the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

Hebrews 6:6 speaks of some to whom repentance is impossible, and Hebrews 12: 17 (referring to Esau) implies the same. Human responsibility there is, otherwise we would not have men commanded to repent (Acts 17:30) and judged for refusing to do so (Rev. 9:20, etc.). Yet repentance is a privilege granted by God, and not inherent in being a human. After Pharaoh had for a third time hardened his heart against God, the possibility of repentance was withdrawn from him, and it is written, "Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (Ex. 8:32; 9: 12, etc.)

### **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

Repentance is usually defined something like this: "A change of mind (or heart) that leads to a change of life." This is all right as far as it goes, but it says nothing about God and what He has to do with repentance. I learned long ago that preaching cannot be based on the dictionary. Nothing explains Bible words like examples of their usage.

Until I began to "re-study" repentance, I had thought of it as relating primarily to a person and his sins. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance" seems to imply as much. The sinner is sorry for his sins and turns away from them. However, the word "godly" brings God into the picture (actually the Greek is God's sorrow or sorrow of God) Evidently God has something to do with the sorrow from which repentance springs. In Rom. 2:4. Paul says, "...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." That God is active in producing repentance is also indicated by Jer. 31:18: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art Jehovah my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented..." Many are the means the Lord uses to turn a man. The beginning point of repentance is often adversity--witness the history of Israel. The Prodigal Son is a classical example; he first became sick of his miserable circumstances. But this is not all of repentance.

Many an addict to narcotics has in desperation turned away from narcotics to alcohol--to become an alcoholic; this is not repentance.

Many an alcoholic has turned away from alcohol to a normal way of life; this is not repentance either. Many a guilt-ridden sinner has entered a monastic order to atone for his sins--but neither is this repentance. Repentance is not merely turning away from sin.

### **"REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD"**

In Acts 20:21, Paul speaks of "repentance toward God." This is the emphasis that I long failed to appreciate. The misery of the pig pen is only the beginning of repentance for the Prodigal. As he casts about for an alternative, he suddenly considers his father's house. But he does more than reflect on his father's goodness. He sees his father in a

different light. He sees himself in a new light. There is a change of direction in his life--he is (within his heart) facing home for the first time since he left. Likewise, the repentant sinner takes a new direction; he's facing toward God. He sees the grace of God as being greater than all his sins.

Paul's "repentance toward God" is coupled with "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance and faith almost overlap. Certainly they are inseparable (in spite of the hair-splitting arguments that would put one before the other as separate "steps"). Faith is dependence upon God--but there can be no dependence upon Him when one is turned away from Him. There may be an initial "act" of repentance, just as there is a moment when one first believes, but repentance--like faith--is a way of life. It means maintaining the soul's orientation toward God.

### **HAVE YOU REPENTED LATELY?**

Sometimes when people say, "I need more faith," what they really should say is, "I need to repent." The lack of spiritual vitality that they feel is due to the fact that their lives have become engrossed in "the cares of this life." How much this is reflected even in public prayers we sometimes hear! Everything is in view--troubles, needs, responsibilities, opportunities--except God. The common response to "besetting sins" is a sincere attempt to overcome them--to turn away. The need is repentance, making the full turn--to Him who has already overcome for us. Repentance is not only a turning from Sin, but from ourselves and our own resources. It is acting upon the whole-hearted conviction that Jesus Christ is our "wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption"--that there is nothing good apart from Him.

When we discover that we are trying to keep one eye upon the Lord and one on circumstances around us, there is need to repent. When we find ourselves to be cold toward prayer, uninterested in Bible reading, unconcerned about the souls of our neighbors--it is time to repent, to turn to the Lover of our souls with the confession that our coldness and indifference has really been toward Him, that we have shared with someone or something else affections that belong to Him alone. When such realization comes to you, repent. And don't forget to be thankful that in His marvelous grace, He has found the way to turn your heart back to Himself.

# Why It Began

*W&W* began for several reasons: At its beginning in 1908, it aimed to encourage individual Christians and the few small Churches of Christ scattered throughout Louisiana without much chance for fellowship or in-depth teaching. It also aimed to stir up believers everywhere to do "greater things for God" in sharing the good news that *Jesus saves*. And it sought to teach "the whole counsel of God" so that His people might grow stronger in faith, hope and love.

For example, there was a need to proclaim God's stunning grace and thus mitigate the legalism that was spreading in many Churches of Christ. But the grace of God was not the only subject that had become widely downplayed. Negative debating about the Holy Spirit was common enough, but positive preaching was rare. Most Church of Christ preachers ignored the divine Comforter/Counselor, though some of them often denounced the errors of Pentecostals. Teaching about the "blessed hope" of Christ's return was sorely neglected too. In the early 1900s Brother Boll wrote that he'd met longtime members in churches he visited who said they had never once heard a sermon on the second coming of the Lord Jesus. For this reason teaching on prophecy was quite often featured in *W&W*.

Sadly, such topics have often become the playground of the cults or of teachers who engage in far-out speculations and sensationalism. As a result, some other Bible teachers neglect the subject almost entirely. Six months ago a woman I barely knew sent a letter with a donation to *W&W*. By her gift she wanted to "acknowledge God's blessing given to me through the reading of His Word and the study of the *Word and Work*." Her husband has been a subscriber for about 40 years, but I knew nothing of the wife's pilgrimage. She shared it in her letter. She had grown up "in a Christian home where the love of God and belief in Jesus as Saviour was 24/7. The Bible was seldom if ever out of arms' reach, and was used to guide our family life. We were members of --- Church of Christ. Yet, no one seemed to touch the book of Revelation. No one taught from it, quoted from it, read from it or understood it. As far back as I can recall, the explanation has been, 'Honey, don't worry about the book of Revelation. It's more important to get to heaven, then someone will explain it to us.'

"So it was as a grown woman in 1962 as ---'s wife, that his copy of *Word and Work* came in the mail to our house. That was the first exposure." Her letter went on to mention "God's blessings ... joy ... promises ... meaning ... hope ... no fear." Those were results of having her man-made blinders removed and of daring to study a portion of God's inspired Word which had been declared "off limits." It is too bad that some churches still brainwash their members regarding the fi-

nal, climactic and faith-building book of the Bible. But thank God that in a number of them during the past 20-25 years, Revelation and other prophetic passages have quit being ignored, and the prospect of Christ's return has become a blessed hope instead of a fearful dread or a holy terror. The following article is needed, helpful and enjoyable -- whether you agree with every jot and tittle or not.

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## **Why I Read REVELATION**

By Matt Proctor

"I don't think I really need to read Revelation," said a woman in my church. "It doesn't make any sense, and the rest of the Bible already tells me what I need to know."

A preacher I know began a sermon series through Revelation, and a visitor from another church came to listen. Why? The visitor explained, "The elders at our church won't let anyone teach or preach on Revelation. They say it's too controversial."

A New Testament scholar chose to deal with Revelation in his doctoral dissertation. His academic supervisor wrote, in only partial jest, "I have serious counsel to give you. If you would have long life and would see good days, keep mum on the subject."

The reasons people avoid the book of Revelation are many. Perhaps we've heard it's hard to understand so we don't even try. Some do read it and discover it is hard, so they don't try again. Maybe we don't want to enter the minefield of millennial views. For many, it's the way we've seen the book abused by fanciful interpreters and misguided, modern-day "prophets." Or maybe we simply have our hands full trying to obey the other 65 books of the Bible. Why add more? Whatever the reason, many Christians never read Revelation.

Since "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful," this last book of Scripture must be important for us as Christians. Remember: John is a preacher writing to ordinary believers, not a professor writing to seminary students. You can understand Revelation. In fact, John is giving exhortation more than information--preaching, more than predicting. So when you read this book, don't ask, "How does this help me figure out the calendar?" Rather, ask, "How does this help me follow Christ?" When read through devotional eyes, we find that Revelation strengthens our obedience and deepens our faith. For example, when I read Revelation:

### **I Approach Jesus More Humbly (chapter 1).**

When I read the Gospels, I see the human Jesus. Certainly, we catch glimpses of His divine glory shining through His earthiness. Je-

Jesus walks on water, heals the sick, raises the dead, and comes back to life. But the Gospels especially want to show us that He was God with skin on, that Jesus was a flesh-and-blood man who ate, slept, laughed, ached, wept, and bled like the rest of us.

We need to know that Jesus can sympathize with our humanity: But there is a danger: We can make Jesus in our own image. Someone has said that we often put Jesus in our theological dryers and shrink Him. He becomes simply our XL Buddy. I can become too familiar with Jesus and lose my awe. But not if I read Revelation. In chapter 1, John describes a towering, terrifying vision of the risen Christ. He is huge and blazing in His holiness. Is this the same Jesus on whose breast John leaned at the Last Supper? Yes, but now the curtain of the incarnation has been thrown back to reveal Christ in all His glory: The Jesus of Revelation 1 could play kickball with our planet. He could flick His finger and send our solar system spinning into space. No children sit on His lap. This Jesus has a sword coming out of His mouth!

In the presence of this Jesus, I cannot just casually stand around. John says that he fell at Christ's feet as though dead! And suddenly; I find myself on my face next to John, heart racing, afraid for my life. I am thankful that Jesus became fully man, but this vision thunders the truth that He also is fully God. He is not a meek and mild Mr. Rogers. He is majesty and Master, and I can never take Him lightly; Revelation reminds me to always approach Jesus humbly; reverently; in awe.

### **I Love The Church More Honestly (chapters 2, 3).**

I love God's idea called the church! I read books like Acts and Ephesians, and I catch God's vision for this vibrant, victorious community; I imagine a small band of believers ablaze with love for Jesus, a tight-knit army battling for truth in the surrounding culture, a missionary society preaching the good news in the marketplace, a compassionate community embracing the sick and shameful with love, a "little Bible college" digging deeply into Scripture together. To be part of a body like that--what a glorious joy! Sign me up!

But then I go to church and find people who sometimes care more about carpet color than compassion, who hold their money too tightly; who bicker and quarrel, who read their TV Guide more than their Bible. Maybe your church has been shamed by sexual scandal, or grown dull by years of the same routine. And if you're like me, at times you have gotten frustrated and felt like giving up on the church.

But not if you read Revelation. All churches have fallen short of the glory of God, and nowhere is that more clear than in Revelation 2 and 3. The churches there are a mess--just like the ones I know. As my colleague Mark Moore writes, "We say we want to be the New Testa-

ment church. Congratulations, we made it!" But the good news is: Jesus still loves these churches. He loves them imperfect as they are, commending each one (except Laodicea) for the good that is mixed with the bad. He accepts them just as they are, but He loves them too much to leave them that way.

Jesus corrects, challenges, and makes promises--moving them closer to maturity; While the bride of Christ has her warts, I see a Groom who treats her with tough and tender love, who will not give up on her. And I am moved to do the same. When I read Revelation, I love the church more honestly.

### **I Enter Worship More Completely (chapters 4, 5).**

Wow! That's really all you can say when you enter the throne room of Heaven. When you read Revelation 4 and 5, you suck in your breath, shield your eyes from the dazzling light, and drop to your knees in fear and wonder. Incense fills your nostrils. An angelic warhost (so vast they count it by ten thousands) shakes the very foundations of the sky with their praise. The countless thundering voices reverberate in your chest. The noise is so loud you can't hear yourself think, and yet it's so beautiful your soul feels like exploding with pleasure.

As overwhelming as this scene is, the creatures, angels, noises, and smells all fade to the edge of your consciousness. You are instead drawn irresistibly to the figure on the throne. You cannot tear your eyes away from God! He is more holy; more glorious, more powerful, more beautiful than you ever imagined. Wow! And then the Lamb appears! He has been sacrificed, but now He is alive and standing and victorious. He is lion, and He is Lord, and He is worthy! Your heart weeps at the goodness of it all.

And when I read these chapters, I weep at the petty wars I wage over worship. How little they all are! Hymns or choruses, books or screens; fast or slow--I've expressed opinions myself. Too often I've focused on the preference and missed the point. Worship isn't a kind of music, it's a kind of mind-set. It's a total focus on the Father, a whole-being concentration on Jesus. When I read Revelation, I realize how small my likes are and how big my Lord is, and I enter worship more fully--no matter the style.

### **I Endure Suffering More Confidently (chapters 6:9).**

When the going gets tough, what do you do? And the going does get tough, doesn't it? Sometimes it gets tough because we're human and live in a fallen world. Phillip Yancey calls Earth "the stained planet." Tornadoes, sickness, floods, car wrecks, cancer--the effects of sin affect us all. Sometimes, however, the going gets tough specifically because we're Christian. Paul promised Timothy, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Or

as Wayne Smith put it, "If you carry the ball, you're going to get tackled." When you stand for Christ, you may lose business, friends, and in many parts of our world, your life. When the going gets tough, what do you do?

Revelation 6-9 tells us to sing! The going gets tough in these chapters--war, famine, murder, earthquakes, stars falling to earth, warrior locusts. The slain believers in chapter 6 ask God, "How long will this suffering last?" In tough times, we wonder if God has forgotten us. But in chapter 7, we hear the believers singing praise to God! They endured the suffering, and now they are teaching us their song. The song's title: "Salvation Belongs to Our God." God does remember us and will save us!

I can endure suffering because of two truths. First, God has me sealed (7:3). Satan can kill the body but he cannot touch my soul. Second, Heaven is waiting (7:15-17). In the eternal care of the Shepherd, I shall never want again. With that in mind, when the going gets tough, I can sing the song of the sealed and saved. Reading Revelation helps me endure suffering more confidently.

### **I Speak God's Truth More Courageously (chapters 10, 11).**

These chapters can be hard to understand. How can they help me in my Christian life? First, notice the main characters: John (chapter 10) and the two witnesses (chapter 11). Second, notice their activity: All three are commanded to speak the message of God. But all three discover that preaching is not all congratulations and conversions. Notice the results: When John swallows God's message, it's bitter. When the witnesses finish speaking their testimony, they are killed!

What does all this teach me? Witnessing means telling God's truth, no matter the consequences.

I don't know about you, but I need to be reminded of that. Our world does not believe God's truth; in fact, it doesn't believe in capital "T" truth at all. It says there is no absolute standard of morality and no "one way" to Heaven. The culture around us molds truth like Play-Doh to fit each situation and, in the interest of keeping peace, I can be tempted to play along. Who wants to be seen as intolerant or judgmental? It's so much easier just to keep quiet.

Which is why we need these chapters. John doesn't write as much to instruct us in witnessing as to inspire us to witnessing. I don't need more explanation. I need examples. It's not information I lack. It's courage. Seeing these men speak boldly for God shoots adrenaline into my soul. They paid the price for faithfulness. So will I! While the messenger should not be offensive, the message will be. The world will reject, but God will reward (11:18). So make me like the guys in

these chapters. Make me a witness! When I read Revelation, I speak God's truth more courageously.

### **I See Evil More Clearly (chapters 12-18).**

Satan is so subtle. The road to Hell is a gradual one, and he doesn't tempt us to run away from God--just to take one small step away. Our sin is often not a blowout but a slow leak. It's not the big deceptions, but all the little lies we buy that eventually bring us down. That's why we must call sin of every size by its true name. Abortion is not a "woman's choice." It is murder. The old TV show was not The Love Boat. It was The Adultery Boat. Some prayer chain items are not "concerns." They are gossip.

But Satan is so sly that I often don't recognize his fingerprints. I watch commercials on TV and listen to them on the radio. I see billboard ads and overhear soccer parents in the bleachers talking about their new cars. Soon I begin to think that getting stuff and looking out for myself first is normal. We all deserve the little rewards in life. But John throws back the curtain of the visible world in Revelation 12-18 to show us reality. Materialism and pleasure-seeking are not harmless pursuits. He says it is sin. In fact, it is sleeping with a prostitute! (17:1, 2). And the pimp who owns her is the devil himself.

John warns: Do not be seduced by the culture around you. He shows that false religion and godless government are not simply misguided institutions. They are evil beasts, and they belong to the dragon. Follow the strings, and you will find they are marionettes of Satan, puppets of the prince of this world. He is calling evil by its true name. What looks harmless is really hellish.

The world is not a playground but a battleground, and the battle is for our souls. The battle rages in the things I buy, movies I see, activities I pursue, priorities I set. In all of these, Satan will try to deceive me into little compromises with the world around. I must keep my eyes open and heed Jesus' words, "Watch and pray." It is only when I see evil as clearly as I should that I pray as fervently as I should. That is why I need Revelation.

### **I Love Christ's Return More Deeply (chapters 19-22).**

What do I pray when I see what the world is coming to? I pray the prayer that John taught me. "Come, Lord Jesus." That has not always been so. There was a time in my life when I prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus...just not yet." I was young and had so much left I wanted to do. There were foods I'd never tasted, mountains I'd never climbed, books I'd never read. I wanted to get married, have kids, enjoy life, and then see Jesus return. "Come Lord Jesus. ..just not yet."

Have you ever prayed that prayer? Do you love Christ's return? (2 Timothy 4:8). Or would you feel a pang of disappointment if you

found He were coming back tomorrow? If you've read this far into Revelation, you surely long for His return. You've seen the world for what it really is--a place marred by sin. You're tired of famine, abortion, murder, deceit, natural disaster, cancer, death, sin, and Satan running loose through this world.

Read Revelation 19-22. Jesus is tired of it too! And the day is coming when He will come crashing through the clouds, the angelic warhost behind Him. Time will screech to a halt. In an instant (not some drawn-out Armageddon battle), Satan and sin and death will be defeated. They will be thrown into the lake of fire, and a new world will be ours! We will live in a city with no prisons, hospitals, cemeteries, or police stations. There will be no more sickness, no more death, no more pain, no more crying, no more night. We will see our loved ones who have died in Christ. We will work and play and laugh and dance. We will explore and learn and talk and worship together for eternity. And best of all, we'll see our Lord face to face. What a glorious day that will be! When I read Revelation, I pray, "Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly."

On my darkest days, it is to this vision that I turn and read. It is this vision that keeps me going. Please: Don't stop reading your Bible at Jude. Read on through Revelation, and I promise you--no, God promises you--that you will be blessed (1:3). Thank God for Revelation!

[Reprinted by author's permission. Matt Proctor teaches Bible at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO. This article first appeared in Christian Standard, April 14, 2002.]

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### **A Hope, not a Riddle or a Code**

"Don't be troubled by the return of Christ. Don't be anxious about things you cannot understand. Issues like the millennium and the antichrist are intended to challenge and stretch us but not overwhelm and certainly not divide us. For the Christian, the return of Christ is not a riddle to be solved or a code to be broken, but rather a day to be anticipated." -- Max Lucado in his book, *When Christ Comes*

# Happy 125th Birthday, Portland Avenue Church of Christ!

A Sermon Preached by Alex Wilson in Nov. 2002

[W&W and this church have been vitally inter-related through the decades. Four of its eight editors ministered there (counting Stanford Chambers, associate minister to R. H. Boll). So it seems fitting to celebrate 2 significant birthdays at the same time.]

Led by the Lord, two men began it all --125 years ago. Both were members at the Floyd and Chestnut Streets Church of Christ\* in downtown Louisville, which established two other daughter churches besides Portland Avenue. One of the men was J. L. Weller, of whom we know no other facts. The other was P. Galt Miller. Brother Miller was not only a member but also an elder at the mother church, and served as an interim minister there in later times. He was also a director of the Louisville Water Co. for several years, and president of an asphalt company. A handsome man, too! (We have his picture.)

In 1877 Brothers Weller and Miller started a mission Sunday-school (or church-planting outreach, we might call it now) at 25th Street and Northwestern Parkway (called High Avenue at that time). It seems that before long other Christians joined and helped them, including some members of 4th and Walnut Streets Church of Christ\* who felt their congregation had become lax in some of its teachings and practices. By April 1878 the group had become a congregation which purchased property with a church building at 25th and Portland Avenue -- where it has been ever since. The property, including the building, cost the princely sum of \$1900.

Those were horse and buggy days, before the era of "horseless carriages" or cars. Thus it happened that the church's "new" meeting house had first been a livery stable. That was a place where folks could rent a stall to keep the horses they owned, or could even rent a horse if they didn't have one. It is said that our present baptistry was originally the horses' water trough! Some Methodists had bought the livery stable and converted it into a church building; then the Church of Christ purchased it from them.

F. G. Allen may have been the first fulltime preacher. He ministered here in 1879-80 while also editing an influential monthly magazine called the *Old Path Guide*. This set a precedent, for 4 later ministers (or co-minister) at this church have also edited Christian magazines. [See below for an excerpt from one of his sermons.]

According to one book, by 1884 the number of members had reached 120. But a later book reports that the church experienced "virtually no growth until 1896" when George Klingman began a 7-year ministry here.

### **A Woman of Strength**

His family story is most interesting. Decades earlier, before George Klingman was born, his grandfather owed a large debt to a friend. Both had lived in Germany but the friend then emigrated to the U.S. Being unable to pay this debt, George's grandfather sent his daughter from Germany to this land to work in his friend's factory. All her pay above what she needed for room and board would go toward paying off that long-standing debt. A few months later this telegram was sent to Germany: "*I'll forgive your debt. I want to marry your daughter!*" They did marry, but the wife later died at the age of 30, having borne 15 children! (That's no misprint; 30 and 15 are correct figures.) Her faith in the Lord was very strong, and three of their sons became preachers -- including George Klingman.

He was a good preacher and also a diligent personal worker, active in home visitation. During his time the church grew to 300 members according to one historian but "about 200" according to another. Maybe it depends on how you define "membership." Some people (even strong and healthy ones, I mean) consider themselves church members even if they show up just 2-3 times a year!

### **A 1-man Bible Institute**

Then in 1904 R. H. Boll became the preacher, at a salary of \$14 a week. He stayed till his death 52 years later, in 1956! (I trust they raised his pay during that time.) Historian Earl West wrote that Boll "could hold his audience spellbound for one and a half hours." (And some of you think your preacher's sermons are long!)

One time Brother Boll, who grew up as a Catholic in Germany, showed a Catholic woman from the Portland area about personally trusting Christ rather than religious rituals or good works. After the Sunday morning meeting when he baptized her, one of our members said to her, "You probably are not used to such long sermons." She replied, "Well, I noticed that, but *I just considered it as penance.*"

Earl West wrote, "[Boll] believed sermons should have both depth and meaning. It was also one of his convictions to be gentle. He observed that one could not keep a horse by whipping it; one must feed it, so he believed preaching should not concentrate on negatives .... Boll was modest, *thoroughly in love with Christ*, an excellent speaker and a completely dedicated student."

Due to such study he became a 1-man Bible institute. Around 1912 he began offering a program of Bible classes which many people attended. Through the years students included numerous men who were already preaching and others who were planning to do so -- or to become missionaries. Here were the subjects he taught in one typical year (fall 1916 through spring 1917): an introductory survey of the whole Bible; Old Testament history from the time of Solomon through Esther; Romans through 2nd Corinthians; the Minor Prophets (12 of them); Psalms and Proverbs; 1st and 2nd Peter plus 1st John. Wow! Also from 1916-56 he edited this monthly magazine, *Word and Work*. And a highlight of each summer was his series of nightly "tent meetings," when a large tent was erected in the back yard -- or in other parts of Portland -- and the Gospel was preached for 3-5 weeks (and a few times even longer).

Brother Boll became an outstanding example of Christlike meekness. For there were numerous preachers and editors who bitterly opposed and slandered him as a false teacher. Such attacks occurred off and on from 1915 till his death in 1956 ... forty-one years! They claimed his pre-millennial interpretation of Bible prophecy was heretical, but in at least some cases their criticism sprang from envy of his popularity. Through the years he responded with forbearance and forgiveness. Because of God's grace to him, he treated others graciously. (He stressed God's grace more than prophecy.)

He also emphasized the right of all Christians to study and teach God's Word as they understood it. God's love in our hearts should enable us to disagree agreeably with each other. One time an elderly preacher from elsewhere, whom Boll respected as a zealous worker for the Lord, asked permission to speak to this congregation, "stating that he wished to set forth his views which were contrary to the way Brother Boll interpreted prophecy. His request was granted and for three nights he spoke and was heard patiently by the congregation. Not a word of antagonism was spoken from the floor, and the brother was treated with kindness and courtesy before and after the meetings." This demonstrated that Brother Boll was willing to differ on matters of interpretation and still receive others as brothers in Christ.

### **Pastor-teachers who Followed Boll**

All three of the men who followed him as preachers -- C. V. Wilson, W. Robert Heid, and now Alex Wilson -- grew up under Brother Boll's preaching. And all three of them not only preached but also served as elders here. It's highly unusual that in the last 106 years (1896-2002) the congregation has had only 5 preachers.

C. V. Wilson began his preaching ministry here in 1957, backed by the encouragement and prayers of his wife Alexina. He was out-

standing in personal work and visitation; also as a leader. He served for years as chairman of the Board of Portland Christian School, and after he retired from preaching he became the school chaplain as well. He urged Christians to fast during one mealtime a week on behalf of all our Christian schools.

Then in 1969 W. Robert Heid, who grew up and was baptized in this church, came back to be an elder and to preach here every other week, rotating with my dad. He also edited *Word and Work*, ran the Heid Printing Company, and -- along with his wife Jane -- was treasurer of Portland Christian School. Eleven years later, in 1980, Dad resigned from preaching, and Brother Heid became the fulltime pulpit minister. (Till then he had preached every other week at Nelsonville, Ky.).

In 1984, after Ruth and I returned from the Philippines, I was given the privilege of becoming the pulpit minister. A few years later I was asked to become editor of *Word and Work* too. Since 1984 the church has added twice-monthly fellowship groups, a monthly day of fasting and prayer, mid-week Bible Club for outreach to local children and youth, and every year or so a special Lord's day to emphasize prayer for persecuted Christians around the world.

#### **"All Welcome Here," and a School**

Obviously there is more to a church than preaching and teaching. For as long as any living member of this church can remember, we have had a sign on the front of our meeting-house which says, "*All Welcome Here, Especially the Stranger and the Poor.*" We try to live up to that. From 1906-1914 the church ran an *orphan's home*. But when more satisfactory conditions for such a ministry opened up in Bowling Green, Ky., the 10 orphans here at that time were moved there.

The old, small white frame building that was just back of the main church-building, till it was torn down in mid-2002, was for some years used as a *home for elderly widows*. As that need diminished, it was remodeled and used as part of *Portland Christian School*.

Speaking of P.C.S., the church began it in 1924, after at least nine years of hoping, praying and planning for it. When it opened it had three teachers and, unexpectedly, 65 students. The school had only 50 desks so hurriedly bought 15 more. When later that year the number of students grew to 85, late enrollees were accepted only if they could provide their own desk.

Stanford Chambers and Claude Neal were the early leaders in the school. Brother Chambers was known for his firm discipline. He ob-

served that in the Bible the period of Law preceded the period of Grace; he felt that principle was important in school-teaching. Later on, Miss Mona Belle Campbell humorously expressed the same view to a beginning school teacher: "If you want to keep order in the classroom, don't smile till Christmas." But lest you think Brother Chambers was a severe man, listen to this: One very cold night in mid-winter, a poor man showed up at church and asked for help. Among other things he had no overcoat. That night he received an overcoat, though it meant that Stanford Chambers walked home without his. It's easy to say, "I'll pray and trust God to provide an overcoat for you." It takes real faith and love to say, "*Here's an overcoat for you. I'll pray and trust God to provide one for me.*"

Brothers Chambers and Neal were strongly assisted by several ladies who gave many years of loving service to P.C.S. Longtime teachers included Sisters Florence Neal, Lura Jones Bornwasser, Allie Smith Gruver, Lloyd Chambers Addams, Lois McReynolds, Mona Belle Campbell and Lois Campbell, among others. Praise God for the ladies!

### Some Ate It Up

P.C.S. opened with 8 grades in 1924, then added one grade yearly during the next 4 years. A number of students through the decades have not taken advantage of the opportunities to receive Christ and grow in Him. But others just ate it up! One was Joyce Copeland, a member of the first class to graduate from PCHS, in 1928. The many missionaries who spoke at the church and school impressed her very much, and she became interested in preparing for overseas work. After graduating here she went to Harding College, where she met and married J. C. Shewmaker. They later were missionaries in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) for 40 years.

And in the 1930s Jack Blaes was a student who, after hesitating a long while, finally turned to the Lord. Then he got so excited by what Christ meant to him that he would go out and thumb rides with drivers heading out of town, in order to tell them the Gospel! After testifying to them, he'd get out and catch a ride back to town -- sharing the Good News again on the way.

For over 50 years P.C.S. was supported entirely by donations, in answer to prayer. No tuition was charged during that half-century, but most families supported the work as generously as they could, and many other Christians helped too. However, due to busing and other factors in the 1970s, suddenly many children were sent to P.C.S. for unworthy reasons. In a number of cases the parents were not really concerned for Christian values, and were not about to make sacrifices on behalf of the school! So in the following years large debts arose.

which sometimes resulted in the faculty and staff being unpaid for many weeks at a time. Due to such deadbeats P.C.S.'s very existence was threatened, and thus we began charging tuition. Even now tuition only covers part of the expenses, and our sacrificial teachers receive salaries less than 1/2 of what they would get if they taught in public school. We should realize that a large percentage of P.C.S.' needed income still must come from donations. Faithful prayer-backers are always vital, too.

Now, nearly 80 years after it began, P.C.S. has over 310 students in kindergarten through grade 12 at three different campuses. It offers a Christ-centered high-quality education from kindergarten through high school. The tuition is less costly than almost all other Christian schools in this region, and some scholarships are available too.

We also have the college-level School of Biblical Studies for high school graduates of all ages. Not near enough people take advantage of the classes it offers in various subjects -- including Bible survey, life of Christ, Bible doctrines, church history, personal evangelism, Christian family life, counseling, etc.

Even Southeastern Christian College got its start here. It began in 1948 as Kentucky Bible College, using the PCC/PCS grounds as its campus until it moved to Winchester in 1954. Thank God for sustaining these different ministries.

### **Prayer and Works**

In the matter of prayer, again we owe a special debt to the ladies. In addition to the regular prayer-meetings open to everyone, through the decades there usually have been ladies' prayer-groups whose intercession has been a vital means of keeping the church going. Currently about five ladies meet weekly for this purpose. And some years ago Becky Rucker organized a telephone prayer-chain for when emergencies arise.

Preacher's wives also deserve special recognition for all the countless things they have done and do, along with others who often labor unsung behind the scenes.

A striking example of such *unsung humble service* is seen in Sister Allie Tharp, whom I remember as quite elderly back in the 1950s when I was a teen. My mother told how Sister Tharp used to go every week to the Marine Hospital (now the Portland Health Center) and help some of the weak and disabled patients by cutting their toenails for them. That's the sort of loving care that our Lord Jesus had in mind when He told us to follow His example even if it meant washing one another's feet.

To assist people in the community who face financial crises we have a "Helping Hand" ministry which requires much love, time and discernment. In recent years Ernie Balsley and Owen Shilling have carried this on.

### **Rare Practices and Wide Fellowship in Christ**

Because of our desire to follow the Bible thoroughly, Portland Church has observed (and still does) two practices which many other congregations neglect. One is church discipline as prescribed in the N.T. For example, over 35 years ago it was learned that a woman who was a member here since childhood was repeatedly committing adultery. The elders appealed to her to repent and once more be true to her husband. They kept counseling, pleading and warning her --but all in vain. So, as Scripture prescribes, the congregation withdrew fellowship from her. (See Matt.18; 1 Cor.5; etc.) Twelve years later she wrote a letter to the church (she had moved away from this area) expressing love and thanks for the way the leaders and members had dealt with her--that they loved her enough to confront her, and also kept praying for her. She repented of her sin and stubbornness, and came back to Christ. She still follows Him today, though her years of rebellion brought much sadness to her life.

The second rare practice is mentioned in James 5. If some seriously ill member of the church requests it, the elders will "pray over him [or her] and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord" (v.14). In some cases (one especially) the Lord has chosen to heal in a most wondrous way. In many other cases He has not chosen to heal, or has done so gradually.

Formerly some members from here began several "daughter churches" in the Louisville area. Also the congregation has through the decades given prayer and financial support to many foreign missionaries -- in Japan, China, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Greece, the Solomon Islands, Russia and other lands. Some of the missionaries were originally members of this church. We are glad that last summer four of our teen-agers went on summer missionary projects, and hope to go again.

Our major outreach to neighborhood children and teens is the "Bible Club" held almost every Wednesday night. Crystal Crowder Hardin began it in her back yard for children who lived nearby. It outgrew her premises and moved here. Bible Club consists mainly of singing and stories and Bible study, plus recreation in the gym, and refreshments. A number of young folks have received Christ as Lord and Savior as a result, though the vast majority of them have not done so. We also have Girl Scouts, and sometimes a basketball team for boys, as we seek to reach and win youth for Christ.

One of our members, Jill Warner, spearheads the Portland Pride community cleanup group. Along with other folks from the neighborhood, several of our members are active in this neighborhood service movement which was awarded special recognition by the local Police Department. Some others are active in seeking to apply Biblical principles to citizenship, moral issues, and helping the homeless.

While we strongly seek to follow the teachings of God's Word, we reject the idea that only churches who agree with us about everything are true churches of the Lord. We cooperated with the Billy Graham Crusade (though not agreeing with all he says and does), and are glad that a number of our ladies and men have been active in Bible Study Fellowship and Promise-Keepers, respectively, plus other cooperative ministries.

### **Our Weakness, God's Strength**

Guess what -- we are *far* from perfect! And I don't want to "toot our own horn" for whatever has been accomplished, but instead give God the glory. We thank our gracious Lord for working in and through us all in various ways, despite our weaknesses. He is so good! We hope all who read these words have experienced that -- or soon will. Don't wait. We want to always be a Christ-centered, Bible-based church which loves and serves people, draws them to our wonderful Lord and Savior, and trains them to serve Him -- right here and also around the world.

We thank Him that we have been here in Portland for 125 years! And we ask, What will the upcoming years be like? Attendance has declined in recent years. But there's an old saying, "The future is as bright as the promises of God." How true! We remember that Jesus said, "According to your faith it will be done to you." But faith without works is dead. Portland Church has been blessed and been a blessing for a century and a quarter because members have trusted God and prayed, but also sacrificed, worked hard, cried and persevered. By His grace may we remain usable to Him.

We could paraphrase the old song by saying, "*Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be fruitful for Jesus than to trust and obey.*" Let's do it.

[\*The Floyd and Chestnut Streets Church of Christ is now the Douglass Boulevard Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). And the 4th and Walnut Streets Church of Christ is now the First Christian Church (Disciples), located on Highway 42 and Wolf Pen Branch Road.]

## **Excerpt from a Sermon by F. G. Allen (1836-87),**

**who ministered at  
Portland Ave. Church of Christ 1879-80.**

Jesus expressed this grand and necessary truth--that except one be born again, he can not experience the reign of God over the hearts and lives of men, in the principles of His divine government. We say this is necessarily true, because it is based on an unchangeable law of our being--the principle of congeniality. This principle determines the enjoyment of association both in the church and out; in this world and the next. The presence of God was blissful till Adam sinned, then he hid from His sight. A guilty "conscience makes cowards of us all." The good enjoy the company of the good. The bad seek the society of the bad. The wicked and debased shun the society of the righteous. How, then, could the presence of the Saviour be a heaven to them? The idea is absurd. With such, the depths of hell are preferable to the presence of God.

Some years ago, while traveling in a stage-coach, a preacher had three young men for his companions. They were much elated in spirit. Very soon one drew out a flask and passed it around. On refusing to imbibe, the preacher heard one whisper to another: "I will bet a dollar that man is a preacher, and I would rather be in hell any day than in the company of a preacher." The preacher mentally said: "Young man, unless you mend your ways you will certainly go where you say you would rather be than in the company of a preacher; but the trouble is, you will not get rid of all the preachers when you get there." The enjoyment of these young men went down about ninety degrees for the rest of the trip. Can we enjoy the kingdom of God when we can not enjoy the company of those who are trying to serve Him? It is impossible. Can we expect to enjoy the holy associations of heaven, when we do not enjoy those of the Church?

--from "The New Birth: Its Nature and Necessity"

# Voices from the Fields

**Philip Ashley** [freshman at Harding U. & son of James/Karen Ashley, who are within months of finishing their translation of the N.T. in the Sa'a language -- see last month's Voices]

I would like to ask for your prayers as [my parents enter the final stretch]. Often the enemy gets desperate as he sees God's Word nearly in the people's hands and he makes last ditch efforts to foil the work. Disease, political problems, transportation complications, uncooperative weather, depression and anything else can become a tool of Satan so long as it serves to distract Mom and Dad from the translation work. So please pray that God will put a hedge of protection around them so that they would be able to focus and press on toward the goal of a Sa'a New Testament. I would also ask that as the time draws near God would work in the hearts of the Sa'a people, that they would develop a hunger to know the character of the Almighty God and the saving grace of His Son, the Christ.

**Philippines:** Central Bible College [Manila] has 73 students this second semester 2002-03. We are now evaluating students who will qualify to graduate this 40th Commencement Exercise. Lately two CBC alumni visited us. They were Jun Caculba, who is now pastoring a church in Isabela, and Alex Granadil, presently ministering at Pampangga. Last January 26, I attended the first anniversary of a church at Cavite started by Goven Sulapas. At the moment he is still studying at CBC. Let us rejoice that CBC is continuously used by God to train workers in His vineyard.

Praise God for the growth of the mission and church work here at Novaliches, Caloocan and Cavite areas. Last December 19, 2002 we have a celebration of the church at Maligaya together with 3 daughter local and house churches. Around 300 people came as we worship and thank the Lord in one of the public schools in the area. We thank the Lord that this month of January, 4 were baptized in Novaliches and 11 were baptized at Tanza, Cavite church.

Last January 25, six pastor-teachers of the house and daughter churches met for planning and fellowship. I again rejoice that all of them were trained at CBC. We are praying that the membership will reach at least 500 by year 2005 if the Lord does not come yet. We are again starting another mission work in one area. Our vision is to plant 10 local churches by 2010, by God's will. We are also training members to witness for Christ at least once a week. --David Moldez

# WHY SUBSCRIBE To WORD & WORK?

Well, here's what one reader said a few months ago: "As the years go by, I value the *Word and Work* even more than I have in the past. I find myself reading old issues over and over again. I wish I had saved all the issues from my past. They would really mean a lot now." Thus wrote Frank Preston, minister at Mackville, Kentucky.

And a reader in Antioch, Tennessee said, "Many thanks for the past few issues of *Word and Work*. Of all the things I read, it is among the best. I most of all appreciate the spirit in which you teach and explain things. I wonder how I may obtain back issues of *Word and Work*."

## 12 REASONS to Read It, and Give Subscriptions to Others

**#1: You should respect the elderly, and W&W is old -- 95 this month!** According to a list I saw, it is the 5th oldest magazine still being published among Stone/Campbell churches. It began in 1908. Only *Gospel Advocate* (1855), *Christian Standard* (1866), *Firm Foundation* (1884) and *The Christian Echo* (1902) are older and still circulating. Scores of other magazines were older than WW, but they stopped for various reasons.

**#2: Because WW stresses the Grace of God** (not man-centered legalism), and is **Christ-centered**, and emphasizes the personality and **power of the indwelling Holy Spirit**. It also stresses love, unity in Christ, holy character, prophecy and many other important Bible doctrines. We cannot emphasize them all at the same time, of course. But we consider them all to be important.

**#3: Because we Try to be Practical** as well as doctrinal. Want to grow in prayer? Deal with depression? Know how to study the Bible more profitably? We've had helpful articles -- and entire issues -- on all those topics. And others too: How to interpret particular books (like Ecclesiastes), or forms of literature (like Biblical poetry and proverbs). How to teach the Bible, too.

Also, How small churches could begin growing again. How we might start new congregations. How to improve our preaching. How elders can develop and improve as leaders. The importance and dynamics of home fellowship-groups. How to manage your time more efficiently, and also tame TV in your home.

**#4: Because we Try To Please Everyone!** For instance, some people (you've probably met a few) are never satisfied unless they can

point out flaws in almost everything. So, to satisfy them, we include at least one mistake every issue!

**#5: Because of Reprints.** From time to time we run golden oldies by Alexander or Thomas Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and various others. And articles *about* them or important events in the history of the Stone-Campbell movement (and church history in general). We also run reprints from R.H. Boll, Stanford Chambers, E.L. Jorgenson, H.L. Olmstead, Frank Mullins, Gordon Linscott and others.

**#6: To benefit from those "Outside" of "Us" in the so-called "premill Churches of Christ":** We have had articles by Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, Max Lucado, Rubel Shelly, Rick Atchley and more.

**#7: To benefit from Outstanding Teachers or Leaders Outside of "Us in the Churches of Christ":** There have been articles by C.S. Lewis, A.W. Tozer, John Stott, James Packer, James Dobson, Bill Hybels, Elizabeth Elliot, David Reagan. and others.

**#8: To provide Missionary Letters with News and Needs.** These provide *fuel for prayer*. (Does your church ever have real prayer meetings, where you spend *at least* 20-30 minutes in actual intercession? If not, what are you waiting for?)

**#9: To learn NEWS re: Meetings, Fellowship-Week schedules, Obits, and what's going on in other Congregations.** [*Hey -- send us news from yours!*]

**#10: To Think Carefully about various Important Issues.** We avoid petty debates and arguments presented in an ugly spirit. But we also try to present various viewpoints and not be one-sided when dealing with important disagreements among sincere disciples. Examples include the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ's return and other prophetic matters, the meaning of "eternal destruction," God's foreknowledge and sovereignty and yet human freedom and accountability.

**#11: To benefit from our good COLUMNISTS:** Dennis Kaufman with his insights as a counselor, Joyce Broyles with a woman's viewpoints, and Edward Fudge on many practical and doctrinal subjects.

**#12: Because W&W usually has a monthly THEME.** Most issues provide fairly thorough coverage of some important subject, to give you a good grasp.

# NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

**Famine in Tell City, Ind.!** Back when news reached the U.S. about the famine and starvation in Zimbabwe and nearby lands, youth from 3-4 churches in the Tell City area held a voluntary and temporary famine of their own: a fund-raiser fast. \$1000 was thus raised to help the famine victims in Zimbabwe.

**Jack Martin, a new friend,** writes, "Just a note to say, 'Hello' and to let you know that we baptized a 17 year old girl into Christ last evening. I have commenced a series on Romans which, though not a verse by verse study, will hopefully serve to give the "gist" (to borrow Bro. Moser's term) of this wonderful epistle. I seek to read it through on a monthly basis and (of course) never fail to grasp something I never had before.... I long for fellowship with Christians who realize that it is 'of Him' that we are 'in Christ Jesus' and not ourselves." For anyone wishing to contact brother Martin: P.O. Box 1000, Ardmore, TN 38449. [ackmartin@minister.com](mailto:ackmartin@minister.com);

**Don McGee's New Ministry** *Crown and Sickle* is the name of a ministry formed late last year by brother McGee. His introductory newsletter says, "This work is centered around the prophetic

word, and the name comes from Rev.14:14 where Jesus is seen preparing to pour out His wrath upon a world that has rejected His grace. This, I believe, is the critical message for today, both for unbelievers and for those who are professing Christians, and to reawaken Christians whose love of our Lord's appearing has grown somewhat cool. It is the prayer of this ministry to present the prophetic word without sensationalism, but in such a clear manner as to redraw our attention to the imminent and greatest event of modern history - the removing of the church from this planet." To get his newsletter: 60498 Floyd Rd., Amite, LA 70422. Or [mcgeed@bellsouth.net](mailto:mcgeed@bellsouth.net). Or 985-748-9593. He'll hold meetings at Cherry St. Church, New Albany, IN from May 11-14.

**George Gallup Jr. Poll Out:** Americans are experiencing an intense search & hunger for the spiritual and an unprecedented desire for religious and spiritual growth. Many Americans seem not to know what they believe and why. Religious faith is broad but not deep. God is popular but is not first in many people's lives. "Belief in God" does not necessarily translate into "trust in God." (Knight Ridder News Service)

## Revivals:

### **Linton Church of Christ (Ind)**

April 6-11 with Bro. Nick Marsh. On Wednesday (9<sup>th</sup>) Bro. Dennis Royse will be speaking on behalf of Woodland Bible Camp.

### **LaGrange Church of Christ**

(Ky) March 31 thru April 4 at 7:30 p.m. Speakers: Nathan Burks, Elmer Wheatley, Ron Flora, Frank Preston, & David Tapp.

### **Waterford Church of Christ**

(Ky) July 6-10 (Sun.-Thurs) with Bro. Bennie Hill at 7:30 p.m. nightly.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Singspirations (March 30)**

Summerville Church of Christ (Ind) at 6:00 p.m.

Sellersburg Church of Christ (Ind) at 7:00.

Ebenezer Church of Christ (Central Ky.), 6:30 p.m.

**2003 Crusade for Christ** at Oak Grove Church of Christ (Louisiana) March 24-27, 2003. Theme: Holiness. Different Speakers. Contact Cleo Russell for additional information at: (225) 294-7814

### **Operation Enduring Freedom**

is the code word for the possible war with Iraq. Many churches are using their bulletin boards with names & pictures of service men & women who have been deployed to the Persian Gulf. We are being asked to remember

these men & women and their families in our daily prayers.

**President George Bush** has stated that he prays daily for our military personnel. He has said that prayer is the greatest gift that we can give anyone. We also need to be praying daily for President Bush and the other leaders of our nation.

### **Woodland Bible Camp Jr.**

**Week #1** will kick off this year's camping season. The date is June 8<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Theme: "God & Country" with a special patriotic emphasis. The week will include possible "fireworks, military color guard and muzzle loaders." For information or registration contact: Alan Borders, R R 3 Box 649, Linton, IN 47441. (812) 847-7385

**Think About It:** "The Christianity that does not begin with the individual does not begin. But the Christianity that ends with the individual ends." --Michael Green, evangelist and Bible scholar from England

### **Ralph Ave. Church of Christ**

(Louisville) We had a good day Sunday with 87 present for services and nine were visitors. One family with four children are looking for a new church. Also, a sister placed membership. We are working toward sending "care packages" to our servicemen and women. (Rita Smallwood)

### **Marines Turn to Christ as War**

**Approaches:** During the days leading up to and during the first

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James R. Satterfield  
114 Brandywynne Lane  
New Albany, IN 47150

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Gulf War, many reports filled the media of soldiers coming to accept Christ. A book was even written, filled with various accounts of soldiers becoming Christians during that time. As the 48-hour deadline and the start of a new war in Iraq looms, soldiers are once again preparing spiritually to go to their "fox-holes." (Koinonia House Online - Chuck Missler)

**Senate Bans Partial Birth Abortions:** Last week the United States Senate passed S.3, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, by a bipartisan vote of 64-33. Senator Rick Santorum's version of the bill passed, without the amendments that would have weakened or gutted the legislation. The bill will go on for vote in the House, and President Bush has promised to sign it if it passes.

This is the fourth time a ban on partial birth abortion has made its way through Congress and the third time a bill has passed the Senate. The first two bills were vetoed by President Clinton, and last year's bill that was passed by the House never made it to a vote in the Senate. However, this bill is expected to be signed into law.

**Robert & Joy Garrett's Schedule** Many of you may already know that I have been asked to keep an appointment calendar for Brother Robert Garrett while he is in USA. If your congregation would like to have Brother Garrett visit and share news about the work in Zimbabwe feel free to call me on 502/491-9375 or reply by e-mail. --Nathan Burks

**"Grace is not God's reward for the faithful, it's His gift for the faithful, it's His gift for the empty and the feeble and the failing."**

-- Roy Hession, *The Calvary Road*